



Grace In The Workplace

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Understanding Grace

The Grace of God **works!** It works in the lives of people who have experienced it through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians are “Children of Grace.” They know what it’s like to be dead in trespasses and sins. They know what it’s like to have no choice but to follow the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air. They know what it’s like to conduct themselves in the lusts of their flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. They know what it’s like to be by nature children of God’s wrath. They also know what it’s like to have God love them, have mercy on them, forgive them and make them alive spiritually in Christ. They know what it’s like for God to raise them up with Christ and seat them in the heavenly places in Christ. They know what it’s like to be saved by grace through faith—and that not of themselves. They know *“it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Christians also know they are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared beforehand that they should walk in them. They know that the “work” prepared for them to do is important and is to be done in His Grace.

The Grace of God “works.” It works in every area of a Christian’s personal relationships, including marriage, family, church, school and the “workplace.” I’ve spent almost 50 years in various “workplaces.” I was unsaved during the early years of my career as a journalist and oblivious of God’s Grace. I’ve spent the last 40 years working as a saved person. What a difference it has been. I’ve talked to hundreds of other Christians who

have had similar experiences. The differences are real. They are powerful and important to understand.

Christians who work outside their home spend from 20 to 40 to 60 or more hours a week “on the job.” Many of us spend more waking hours at a workplace with co-workers than we do at home with our family. How should we spend that time? What is our responsibility to God? To our boss? To our co-workers? Our employees?

The Apostle Paul does not make unique distinctions about the way Christians should behave in different settings. He doesn't say we should be one way at home, another way at school, another way at church, and another way at work. The “number one” complaint I've heard about Christians, before and since I was saved, is that they are a bunch of hypocrites. Unsaved people love to throw that in the faces of God's People (I did before I was saved). They claim Christians act one way at church and another way at home, work and play. God won't accept that excuse from unsaved people who try to use it as a reason why they didn't believe in Christ, but it does give witnessing Christians a more difficult time sharing the need to receive Christ as Savior.

Paul taught Christians to live a life of grace in all situations and settings. Living a **GraceLife** begins with an understanding of God's Grace and who we are in His Grace.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Ephesians 1:3-4

If you are a Christian, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. There are no spiritual blessings we do not have. Paul enumerates some of those blessings to us.

“... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our

inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:5-14

Spiritual blessings are ours for eternity. Physical blessings last only a short time. Anything that has long-term importance is already ours. That fact should swell our hearts with gratitude and awe. We can't hope or wish for any spiritual blessing we don't have because we already have it. That should give every Christian great personal satisfaction and confidence. We don't lack for anything important.

The Impact of Grace

I've learned that a HUGE part of experiencing grace in the workplace is understanding how God's Grace impacts me. It begins with "who" we are in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God chose His Children of Grace before the creation of the world. He knew you and chose you before He said His first *"Let there be."* Before God said, *"Let there be light,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind,"* He had already chosen you. Before God said, *"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,"* He had already chosen you. Now that's special! We were not

a mistake or an afterthought. God chose us in Christ “before the creation of the world.”

God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world *“that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”* “Holy and without blame” is a fascinating concept. We are “holy and without blame” in Christ because of His Holy Sacrifice. Paul told the Ephesian believers they were fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household – *“in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”* (2:21) Paul wrote that Jesus Christ *“also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* (5:25-27) Paul called the Colossian believers *“saints”* and *“faithful in Christ Jesus.”* (1:2) He wrote the Colossians that they once were alienated from God and were enemies in their minds because of their evil behavior – *“yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight —”* (1:22) Paul told them they were God’s chosen people, *“holy and beloved.”* (3:12)

That is our position in Jesus Christ. We are “holy and beloved.” The combination of being holy and beloved means we have everything we need to do the work God has prepared for us. We have no “marks” against us. We have no reason to “feel” guilty about anything since we aren’t guilty for anything. Jesus made us “holy” through His death on the Cross. God forgave all our sins: past, present and future. Paul told the Roman believers

they had *“died to sin”* and that *“he who has died has been freed from sin.”* (6:2,7) That is our position in Christ: *“dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (6:11) Christians have been set free from sin and become *“slaves of righteousness.”* (6:18)

Does our position in Christ mean we never sin again? Hardly. We are still human. Paul told the Romans he put the issue of dealing with sin in human terms *“because of the weakness of your flesh.”* (6:19) We live with our flesh every minute of every day we’re on earth. Christians have a capacity to sin. In fact, we can experience a strong physical pull toward sin. Christians are “holy and without blame” in God’s sight, but they can and do sin. That’s a dilemma we all face. We are spiritual and physical at the same time. The spiritual wants what God wants. The physical wants what the flesh wants. Paul used his own life as an example of the battle with sin.

“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:21-25

Every Christian has to deal with sin from a very personal position. Something that causes me to sin won’t necessarily cause you to sin. Things you struggle with in your life may not be the same things I struggle

with. We have to grow in Christ, depend on His Strength and learn how to control the cravings of our sinful nature through dependence on Him. That's what will unleash the Power God has stored in each of us through His Holy Spirit. The Spirit understands our individual battles with sin and is prepared and equipped to help us through each one.

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Romans 6:11-14

Consider for a moment what happens when Christians offer themselves to God and parts of their bodies to Him as instruments of righteousness? That means God can do whatever He deems best with our brains, mouths, eyes, ears, hands, arms, feet, legs, and hearts. Think about how much Power results when God's Grace is our Master. It leads to Holiness in every aspect of a Christian's life.

“I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the

end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:19-23

We call Christ our **Lord and Savior**. The Greek word for Lord is *kurios*. It signifies someone who exercises power and authority over other people. English translators have chosen the words “Lord, master, and owner” to explain the meaning. Christ is our Master. He Owns us. He bought us with the price of His “blood-death” on the Cross. We belong to Him. His Will is to be our will. His Desire, our desire.

This is where a “workplace ministry” begins. We must understand our spiritual position in Christ and the Power living in each of us. Success in serving the needs of others (ministering) begins with our own spiritual health.

Spiritual health is a matter of considerable growth that begins with the way we think and believe.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in

us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:1-6

Do you see the key? “...those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires ... the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” Spiritual health that leads to a healthy ministry begins in our “minds.”

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

Growth as a Christian includes **do's** and **don'ts**. Paul says one of the don'ts is **don't be conformed** to this world. The Greek word for “do not be conformed” is *suschematizo* and means “to fashion alike, to fashion or shape one thing like another, conform to the same pattern outwardly” and deals with that which is unstable, changeable, transitory on the outside. What doesn't God want us to conform to? “this world” – *aioni* – which means “age, era, period of time.” It is used in the New Testament for spiritual or moral characteristics. Paul wrote the believers in Rome that God did not want them fashioning their lives to look like the outward pattern and appearance of the present age. As with most of Paul's directives, a **don't** is replaced by a **do**.

Paul wrote that one of the “do’s” of Christianity is **transformation by renewal**. “Transformed” is *metamorphousthe*. It means “to change into another form.” “Transfigured” is another way of translating the word. It means to change the outward expression to an expression which is representative of the inner being. That’s what happened when Christ was “transfigured” in full view of His disciples. Paul is calling on believers to stop “conforming” (*suschematizo*) to the world’s pattern outwardly – what they followed inwardly before salvation – and start “transforming” to what is new inside them. Christians do that by the “renewing” of their minds. “Renewing” is *anakainosei*. It means to “make new and different.” It is a changing for the better. It is an improvement of the mind (*nous* — the seat of reflective consciousness, the faculties of perception and understanding).

Christians are always in a state of “renewing” their minds. That’s one of the joys of being a Christian. We don’t ever have to become stale or cemented in our thinking. Salvation is the beginning of a new way of thinking; a way that grows in the knowledge of Christ forever. It is our new way of “testing and approving” what God’s Will is for our lives. That is vital as we show His Grace in the workplace.

The Importance of Attitude

One of the big buzz words in the workplace these days is “attitude.” It’s the topic of books, calendars, seminars and news programs. Some of the phrases going around are:

- “It’s your attitude not your aptitude which determines your altitude in life”
- “The positive thinker creates a majority”
- “The positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible and achieves the impossible”
- “A person will be just about as happy as they make up their minds to be”
- “Positive attitudes create positive people”
- “Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.”

What I find interesting is that motivational speakers and positive thinkers believe they invented this idea. Not so. “Attitude” is alive within the Word of God. God is the Creator and Original Motivator.

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your

mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:20-24

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:5-11

A major problem with modern “positive thinking” is it depends on the power of the human heart and mind without God. The results are temporal and small at best. God wants His Children to have “Christ’s attitude.” It is eternal and large in scope. The “attitude of the world” is to succeed in pleasing ourselves. The “attitude of Christ” is to succeed in doing what pleases God. No one has ever been as successful as Christ; not even close. If we choose attitudes on the basis of who’s best, richest or most powerful, the attitude of Christ wins every time.

Christ was the most successful “Minister” Who ever served humanity. Why is that? What can we learn from Christ about successful ministry in the workplace? We find some of the answers in Paul’s letter to the Philippian Christians.

First, Jesus knew Who He was. “... Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God ...” (Philippians 2:5-6). Jesus did not have an identity crisis. He didn’t minister to others to “find Himself” or “prove” anything. He knew He was God. He knew His Eternal Power. We are God’s Children of Grace. We are chosen, predestined, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, included, marked, sealed, guaranteed, and loved. We are “in” Christ and He is “in” us. We are dead to sin but alive to Christ. We are the righteousness of God in Christ. Christ “in” us will live His Life through us. We do not have to “try” to live the Christian life. Jesus will live His life through us from His position “in” us. We simply cooperate with Christ Who is in us. We are secure in Him. We are “in” Christ. There is no safer place to be. No one, no matter how powerful, can hurt us in any eternal way because we are safe “in” Christ. We have our eternal identity in Christ. We have nothing to prove to anyone. We are already the “most” we can be. We are already as “close” to God as we can be. We can’t get any closer to God than being in Him and Him being in us. We can’t become any more a member of His spiritual family than we are already. We can’t become any more “sons” of God than we are already. We are God’s Children. We are His heirs. In fact, God uses us to “prove” His Grace. “... and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of

yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:6-10)

Second, Jesus “did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:6-7) That means even though Jesus was an equal member of the Godhood with the Father and The Holy Spirit and existed with them in eternity, He did not consider equality with God something to be prized (*harpagmon*) and retained at all costs. Rather, He “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of Lords. He is God. Millions of angels worship Him in eternity. He Created and commands the universe. Yet, Jesus made Himself nothing (*ekenosen*). He “emptied” Himself of His God-form and took on the form or nature (*morphen*) of a slave (*doulou*). God became flesh. God became man. God became a servant.

Third, “being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8) The Eternal Son of the Living God “humbled” Himself and became obedient to the point of death—even the death on the cross. What an amazing example! The attitude of a servant is one of humility. The word is *etapeinosen*. It is something Jesus chose to do. It is an extreme case of someone bringing themselves to a “low” position. Christ did that for us! He brought Himself to a low position and became obedient to death. “Obedient” is *hupekoos*. It means “to listen and obey.” Jesus

heard His Father's Voice and obeyed. What an example for us as we live the GraceLife in our homes, churches, schools, and workplaces. Christ "in" us will listen to His Father and obey. Christ "in" us will lead us to listen, know and obey the Will of God. Jesus obeyed His Father's Will to the extreme. His Father's Will was that Christ die cruelly at the hands of those He created in payment for "their" sins. The Father's Will was that Christ take on Himself, on His physical body, the sins of the world. Nothing God will ask us to do will ever compare with the "lowness" and "humiliation" of the Holy Service of Christ.

Fourth, "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11) The Christ "in" us is victorious. He is exalted. He fills the highest place and has the Name that is above every name. Every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The Christ "in" us has succeeded in every way. He pleased His Father. He did His Father's Will. He had the right attitude, gave completely and unselfishly of Himself to fulfill His Father's Will, and was successful. Paul wrote that our "attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Our victory, our success, in ministry is tied to that attitude. How do we do something that is so spiritually powerful? How do we have the attitude of a servant? How do we humble ourselves and become obedient to everything God asks of us? How can we be successful in ministry? By understanding that we are "in" Christ and Christ is "in" us; by

having the same attitude that Jesus had. That comes from understanding we can't and He can. Christ "in" us will live His Life through us powerfully and successfully. In this Truth we find the secret to expressing God's Grace in the workplace.

Being “In” Christ

We don't have the physical, mental or emotional ability in and of ourselves to fulfill God's Will in our lives. Thankfully, God doesn't ask us to do that. God placed us “in” Christ and Christ “in” us so Christ would be the One doing the work through us. Our ministry is His ministry. Christ is the Minister “in” us. Christ is the One Who loves others through us. Christ is the One Who deals with our problems. Christ is the One Who convinces others of their spiritual needs. Christ does it all so He will receive all the glory, honor and praise.

We are a people of Grace. We are a people of The Spirit. We are a people of Love. Our ministry flows from being united “in” Christ; from intimacy with the Spirit Who is “in” us. Christ ministers to others from within us and through us.

Meditate on the following Scriptures and ask God to show you their meaning in light of your ministry for Him and to others while you're on earth. Think about the Power alive in you for the service God gives you. Ask God to show you what His Truth means to your life and ministry. Praise God for it. Apply it. Do it.

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of

sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ” Romans 6:5-11

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1-2

“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Romans 8:10-11

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though

God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified." 2 Corinthians 13:5-6

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." Galatians 2:20-21

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:26-29

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” Colossians 1:27-29

That brings us full circle to having the Attitude of Christ as we serve Him and minister to the needs of people around us. That is our lesson. That is our power. That is our goal.

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” Philippians 2:1-5

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